193. Responsible Government.

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI VISVANATHA PILLAI (*Quilon taluk, Group I*), speaking in Malayalam said that the Head of the Administration was not responsible to the people. This was a great bar to the progress of the country. The innumerable drawbacks in the administration of the country, the increasing corruption in public service and the unpardonable delay in the working of the Government machinery were all the result of such a state of affairs. Even though the burden of administration had grown too heavy to be borne by one man, the Dewans who were in charge of the administration were not willing to associate the representatives of the people with the task of administration. The country had suffered much on account of the absence of responsible Government in the State. The assignment of the Kanan Devan Hills, the Periyar lease, the Interportal Trade Convention, the agreements regarding tea-duty and the participation in the Cochin Harbour Scheme were some of the instances in point.

The member next referred to some aspects of the administration and first spoke about public service. There was no paucity of efficient and highly qualified men in the State and yet many foreigners were imported as heads of departments, on very high pay. The financial condition of the country did not allow this. The higher officers were highly paid, while the pay of the lower ranks was very low, which tempted them to be corrupt. The pay of the high paid officers should be reduced at least by 20 per cent. The question of the reduction of the pay of Government officers in general was being considered in British India and in western countries. The Government had proposed to appoint a committee in connection with the question of recruitment to public service. In this matter the principle of communal representation on the basis of population should be accepted. The policy of appointing High Court Judges as the Head of the administration would prejudicially affect the administration of justice, and hence should be given up.

The member next urged about the necessity for the early reconstitution of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. The Assembly as it was, did not serve any useful purpose. It had no statutory recognition. It was twenty-seven years since it was started and it had done some useful work in the past. The question of reforming the constitution of the Assembly was taken up at the time of the Dewanship of Sir M. Krishnan Nair. Both Dewan Bahadur T. Raghaviah and Mr. M. E. Watts promised to do the needful during their tenure of office as Dewans. But their promises remained unfulfilled. The present Dewan was silent over the matter.

There was an unprecedented depression in the trade of the country. There was a reduction of Rs. 48 lakhs in the value of the trade during 1105. All the local products were being exported to foreign countries at a low price fixed by the foreign manufacturers. The export of raw products should be prohibited and they should be utilised for

the manufacture of articles required for local consumption. The Government should establish factories and with the help of experts to be got down, should arrange for the manufacture of rubber tyres, tubes matches, candles, soap, glassware, paper, sugar, lamps and other articles required for local use.

The educational system of the country stood in need of reform. The present literary education only helped to increase the number of unemployed in the State. Vocational and technical training should be introduced in the school curricula. Primary education should be made compulsory. The study of Hindi, the common language of India, should be popularised in schools. The problem of unemployment was assuming serious proportions in the State. The *puduval* lands fit for cultivation, available for registry, should be divided into small blocks and assigned to the unemployed people.

The attitude of the Government towards the temperance movement in the State was most unsatisfactory. The Government should be ashamed of the Police excesses at Shertallai, Quilon and other places in connection with the temperance movement. The State had not witnessed such repression ever before. The Government had not withdrawn the Press Regulation. Since the British Indian Government were withdrawing the prosecutions launched against the Newspapers at the time of the civil disobedience movement, the Travancore Government also should withdraw the prosecutions against the Newspapers here. With reference to the Round Table Conference, the Government did not care to take the people into their confidence, as was done in the Mysore State. There were many vital questions relating to the State, such as the intervention of the Political Agent in matters of internal administration, the improvement of the local ports, the Interportal Trade Convention, the salt duty, the question of subsidy to the British Government, etc., which had to be brought to the notice of the Conference. The people should have been consulted in these matters.

The inordinate delay in the working of the administrative machinery was a special feature of the present administration. Such important matters as the opening of Land Mortgage banks, the removal of liquor shops from within municipal limits, Jail reform, the land colonization scheme, appointment of commercial agents in foreign markets, the appointment of a full time Protector of Depressed Classes, educational reform, encouragement of Homœopathic system of treatment, the reduction of demand notice fees, the Anchal rates and the tolls and many other similar important questions, still remained without action. The Head of the Administration was not to be blamed for this. It was the system of Administration that was at fault. The burden of administration had become so enormous in recent years that it could not be borne by one man. There was no use in appointing committees and obtaining their reports. No action had yet been taken on the reports of the Jenmi Kudiyan Committee, the Unemployment Committee, and the University Committee. The Irrigation Committee had not submitted its report yet. Though the Banking Enquiry Committee

had recorded the opinion that the *bona fide* agriculturists did not get the benefit of agricultural loans, the Government had sanctioned an additional allotment of Rs. one and a half lakhs under agricultural loan with a view to relieve the economic depression in the country. It would have been better if remission of tax had been allowed to this extent, the amounts being arranged to be collected in instalments. The general health of the people was not satisfactory. Diseases such as small-pox, fever, typhoid fever, malaria, consumption, and dysentery were on the increase. Though it had been stated in the Administration Report of the State for 1105 that there was a reduction in the number of serious offences, still it was found that offences under murder had increased from 77 to 94. Further the offences under theft and house breaking were also on the increase. It was not right that the members of certain communities should be exempted from capital punishment, while members of other communities, committing similar offences, were subjected to the extreme penalty of law. This distinction between communities should not exist in the matter of punishments, and in the eye of the law all communities should be the same.

The member next said that a careful examination of the conditions in Travancore would show that no other Indian State was as fit for the establishment of responsible Government as Travancore. In the Butler Committee's report it had been stated that Travancore and Mysore were the two States fit for the introduction of responsible Government. In education, the State stood in the forefront. In female education also, the country occupied an enviable position. Women enjoyed equal civic rights with men. Newspapers were in plenty in the State. The local self-governing institutions, the Village Panchayats and the Bench Magistrate's Courts were working most satisfactorily. The co-operative movement had made good progress in the country. The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, a representative institution which was in existence for over a quarter of a century had afforded sufficient training to the people to make them fit for responsible Government. The Legislative Council which was established in 1888, was one of the oldest Legislative Councils in India. The efficiency of the reformed Council made Dewan Mr. Raghaviah to predict a bright future for it. The position and status of the present Legislative Council and the influence and power it wielded also indicated the awakened political consciousness of the people of the country. All these showed that the time had come for the system of administration obtaining in the country being reformed and for responsible Government being established. The Secretary of State for India had stated in the Montford report that the Native States in India should be granted responsible Government and on the basis of this statement, in 1917 His Majesty the King Emperor had proclaimed that responsible Government was the goal of British administration in India. In the National Congress and in the States' People's Conferences, resolutions had been passed to the effect that responsible Government should be introduced in the Native States. During his recent visit to the Hyderabad State, H. E. Lord Irvin, the Viceroy, had also given expression to the same idea.

The necessity for the immediate establishment of responsible Government in the State was urged on the attention of the Government by repeated representations in the previous sessions of the Assembly. At the 25th Session of the Assembly, the then Dewan Mr. Watts said that time was not yet ripe for the responsibility of the minister to be rendered to a representative body and not to the Ruler of the State. At the last session, the Dewan's reply was that our past experience had shown us that there was no need for us to be impatient and that it would only be wise and proper to leave it to our Rulers, who at the fit and proper time, gave the people the privileges they now enjoyed, to extend this privileges further at the proper time. It was doubtful whether at a time when India and all the world outside were undergoing a period of transition and when the cry for responsible Government had become universal, the people of Travancore would be satisfied with such a reply. The only satisfactory solution would be the early introduction of a system of Government under which the Head of the Administration would be responsible to the people of the country.

194. Responsible Government.

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI (*Kottayam taluk, Group II*) said that the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly had lost all the characteristics of a representative institution and had become a meeting place of petition-mongers. Under such a state of affairs it was doubtful whether men of standing and status would care to come forward as members of the Assembly. The Government exhibited unpardonable indifference in carrying out the suggestions and representations made in the Assembly. The other representative institution, *viz.*, the Legislative Council, also shared the same fate. Many of the Bills passed by the Legislative Council during some years past had been totally lost sight of. The Government did not set any value to the opinions expressed by the representatives of the people. The representations made by them regarding the urgent needs of the people or about the grievances suffered by them on account of vagaries of Government officers were not cared for by the Government. With reference to the complaint of corruption in public service, at the 26th Session of the Assembly, the Dewan said that no Government would be justified in taking action against an officer, merely because there was a rumour or there was a vague statement by somebody that an officer was corrupt. This showed the mentality of the Government in the matter. The chosen representative of the people, one who commanded the respect and confidence of the whole constituency represented by him, was only a mere "some body" to the Government and no value was to be placed on his words.

Speaking of public service, the member said that corruption was rampant in most of the departments in the State. The Police and Judicial Departments excelled the other departments in this matter. The people suffered innumerable hardships on account of the avarice of the Police officers. They received bribes both from the complainant